

REMARKS

The final Office Action of February 25, 2003 has been received and its contents carefully considered. An RCE is being filed concurrently to permit further prosecution.

The present Amendment revises several claims, and adds a new claim 10 to further protect the invention.

The Office Action rejects the claims for obviousness based on patent 6,485,429 to Forstner in view of patent 4,397,317 to Villa-Real. For the reasons discussed below, however, it is respectfully submitted that the current formulation of independent claim 4 is patentable over these references.

Independent claim 4 is directed to a digital pressure gauge that includes a pressure sensor and a control unit for establishing a blood pressure value. However, claim 4 also recites that the control unit monitors “cumulative usage of the digital pressure gauge by automatically maintaining ... at least one of a count parameter corresponding to a number of operations of the digital pressure gauge and an operational duration parameter corresponding to a usage period thereof, said control unit detecting that calibration of the digital pressure gauge is required if at least one of said count and duration parameters exceeds a predetermined threshold value corresponding thereto.”

The Office Action contends that Forstner discloses a control unit that monitors cumulative usage. However, the passages in column 3 of the reference that the Office cites in support of this contention do not support it at all. An ordinarily skilled person who had read the reference would understand that Forstner’s arrangement monitors a person for arrhythmia; his arrangement does not monitor itself to detect whether the arrangement needs to be calibrated.

Independent claim 4 also recites "means ... for warning the operator if the control unit detects that calibration of the digital pressure gauge is required." This, too, is neither disclosed nor suggested by the Forstner reference.

It is respectfully submitted that Villa-Real does not cure the deficiencies of Forstner. That is, Villa-Real does not disclose a control unit that monitors cumulative usage of a digital pressure gauge and emits a warning when the digital pressure gauge needs to be calibrated.

Since the remaining claims depend from claim 4 and recite additional limitations to further define the invention, they are patentable along with claim 4 and need not be further discussed.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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